

October 23, 1959

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
October 21, 1959

Secretary Herter
Other s present: Mr. Hagerty, General Persons,
General Goodpaster

Secretary Herter showed the President a report of Adenauer's views regarding summit and pre-summit meetings, together with a letter to the President from de Gaulle rejecting the idea of a pre-summit meeting within the next few weeks, and a summit meeting in December. He said that the British feel it is very important to have a Western summit meeting as soon as possible. De Gaulle's suggestion -- for a summit meeting in May or June -- does not fit at all well with what he knows the President's schedule is for visiting Russia.

The President, on reading de Gaulle's letter, said that he evidently sees any agreement or action on Berlin as a "retreat." However the President felt we must look for an acceptable solution in this area. He said he had noted in this connection a report of a statement by Khrushchev that he would not agree to the incorporation of West Berlin in West Germany.

Mr. Herter said he understood that Mayor Brandt of Berlin would not mind what political setup was decided on so long as the economic arrangements were such as to assure the freedom of West Berlin from East German domination. In response to a question by the President, Mr. Herter said he expected to have any suggestions the British have within the next few days. The President said that Macmillan ought to go to see de Gaulle with a view of convincing him that we really need the Western summit meeting. He commented that de Gaulle puts disarmament quite low on the list of topics for consideration. Disarmament can only proceed through mutual agreement, and he did not think we can hold the stand of insisting that the Soviets have got to show good faith by unilateral deeds before we make any agreements or concessions.

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He commented that he does not think that the Queen's condition should necessarily delay de Gaulle's visit to Britain. He also commented that we have gone a long way to support de Gaulle on Algeria and it is quite unrealistic to think that we can put the Russians on probation. The President thought we should be showing signs of action. Otherwise Khrushchev will have reason to think that we are simply stalling, and the situation will drop back to what it was a few months ago.

Secretary Herter showed the President a proposed draft of a reply to de Gaulle. The President thought it was focused too much on a summit meeting and thought it should be tied more to the need for the development of an agreed Western program and approach on disarmament, Berlin and other questions.

Mr. Herter asked if State could have the President's permission to keep Ambassador Bruce informed on these exchanges. The President said that they might do so through sending the gist or a summary of his letters, but should not send a copy of the letters. He did ask that a copy of his letter to de Gaulle be sent to Macmillan with a request that Macmillan try to arrange a session with de Gaulle. He then commented that the fact that the Russians see us taking these actions, including a Western summit, shows them that we are trying to act in good faith.

The President asked for a comment to be brought into the letter to the effect that a Western summit meeting might serve as an opportunity to bring up to date, and review, our NATO posture. A comment might also be made that such a meeting will assist us to avoid any tendency for our relations with the Soviets to shift toward a bilateral basis.


A. J. Goodpaster
Brigadier General, USA

